

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, today we took the first vote in what may be a series of votes on how we deal with our constitutional responsibility. It was an important vote, because it was a vote to be fully inclusive, not only of every Member of the House, but to be as inclusive as possible of every American.

At this critical time for our country, being open with the American people, giving them a report that they paid the bill to produce, letting them reach their conclusions, as we reach our constitutionally required conclusion, is an incredibly important thing to do.

The job of the Congress is to do what the Constitution requires. The job of the Congress is to do what the Constitution requires and what is best for the country. As the American people enter into that job with us, I know we want to be prayerful, not only for Members of Congress, but we want to be prayerful for President Clinton and his family and for the United States as we do what the Constitution requires. We are a system of law.

OPPOSE PROPOSED REMOVAL OR BREACHING OF DAMS

(Mr. NETHERCUTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. NETHERCUTT. Mr. Speaker, I want to again voice my opposition to the proposed removal or breaching of dams on the Snake and Columbia Rivers in Washington State. Some advocate that these dams be destroyed in an effort to restore wild salmon runs.

I am concerned about recovery of wild salmon runs, but I also believe that we must not destroy our multiple use river system that has been created over the past 40 years. I seek to implement a salmon recovery plan that is science-based, maintains a healthy environment for other fish and wildlife species, but balances the needs of our local economy and our rural way of life in the Northwest.

There are serious environmental effects of replacing hydroelectric power with fossil fueled generation. Dams are a clean and renewable energy resource. To replace this source of electricity with natural gas fired turbines would add thousands of tons of pollutants and chemicals into the atmosphere annually.

We must examine all sources of fish loss. Ocean conditions, predator populations and over-harvesting on the river have yet to be fully addressed. Salmon recovery can be accomplished using developing technology and sensible harvest limits. Dam removal will irreversibly remove jobs, harm the economy and the environment, while the benefits to the salmon would remain uncertain.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under the Speaker's an-

nounced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. RIGGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SOLEMN CONSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES PLACED UPON CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. WISE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the greatest responsibility that a Member of Congress can face is the question of whether or not to go to war, to commit men and women of this country to armed conflict. The next greatest responsibility after that is the matter of impeachment of the President of the United States. With the delivery of the report by Kenneth Starr, the special prosecutor, to this body, that process of deliberation began, so a new set of rules, a new stage is set for the 435 Members of this House of Representatives, and it is every bit as solemn and every bit as important and every bit as somber as those deliberations that this body has had to make in matters of war. Remember, it has only been several times in our Nation's history that we have been to this stage.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know at this moment what are the allegations in the report that Mr. Starr delivered to the Congress. To my knowledge, perhaps just a few people know, and no one in this body knows. Soon the world will know via the Internet. We will all be reading and reviewing.

I do know that what the President has admitted to is wrong and distressing. I do know that the allegations in the report, which I have not seen, may be even more disturbing. There is no excuse for the already-admitted errors in the President's personal conduct, and that is something I think that all Americans, including the President of the United States by his very statements today, as well as in previous days, concur in.

That is not going to be the issue in front of this Congress and in front of this House of Representatives. The issue will be somewhat the President's personal conduct. The issue though, more significantly, is whether it is grounds for impeachment of the President.

So impeachment is the proceeding that this body goes about beginning today. It is not about polls, it is not about partisanship, it is not about personal opinion. It is about whether a standard has been crossed, a threshold has been reached, that requires this body, the House, to issue articles of impeachment, that then begin in effect a trial in the United States Senate.

With the resolution that passed today, and which I voted for, to receive the report, to make it public, I now and 434 other Members of this House become in effect grand jurors, because our responsibility is to determine whether there is probable cause to vote articles of impeachment that the Senate then takes up. That requires under the Constitution that we weigh all facts and we measure whether the offense is indeed grounds for impeachment.

I support making these documents public. The first report will be made public this afternoon, and then subsequent reports after review by the Committee on the Judiciary. I would have preferred, yes, that indeed the President had been granted an opportunity to review what is in the report, in the same manner that this body has permitted review by other officials that have been in similar situations in disciplinary actions.

□ 1230

If the choice is between making public and not making public, it should be made public. I just ask that all of us remember that this report is not a guaranteed statement of fact; it is allegations by the special counsel, and that the hearings that will be held will flesh that out further, the extent to which they are valid, the extent to which they can be challenged, and that no one should be rushing to snap judgment in a serious moment like this.

This is the second time this century that this process has taken place. This cannot be a rush to judgment via polls or talk shows or whatever the public whims are.

So we approach this carefully and seriously with due deliberation and reflection.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). The Chair must remind Members to avoid personal references to the President. It is no longer permissible to debate the information addressed by House Resolution 525.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)